

News from the

U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions

Michael B. Enzi (Wyoming), Chairman



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GAO Study Confirms Need to Require Uniform Transfer Policies Among Colleges, Universities

Washington, D.C. - U.S. Senator Mike Enzi, R-WY, Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, said today a newly-released Government Accountability Office (GAO) study confirms the need to require colleges and universities to clearly state their policies concerning acceptance of transferred credits - as provided for in the "Higher Education Amendments Act of 2005," which is now pending in the Senate.

The GAO study (GAO-06-22), released Tuesday, reiterates the importance of ensuring consistent consideration of students' previous coursework and found that institutions vary significantly on how they review and apply a student's transferable credits. In fact, many officials representing colleges and universities with regional accreditation told GAO that they would not accept credits from nationally-accredited schools.

"It's important that we give students some assurances that they will not have to repeat classes they have already taken when transferring to another school - and that we provide them help to find out where their credits will be accepted," Enzi said. "The provisions included in the Higher Education Amendments Act will help students avoid lost credits and will reduce costs to the federal government."

Enzi was joined by Congressman John Boehner (R-OH), Chairman of the House Committee on

Education and the Workforce, and Congressman Buck McKeon (R-CA), Chairman of the House Subcommittee on 21st Century Competitiveness, in requesting the study. Commenting on the report, Boehner said: “With an increasingly mobile student population and growing numbers of non-traditional students pursuing higher education for the first time, or returning to school to complete their education, it has become more important than ever to ensure that college students are free to transfer from one institution to another without unfairly losing credit for quality courses they have completed.”

Enzi, Boehner and McKeon asked the GAO to examine how postsecondary education institutions decide which credits to accept for transfer, how states and accrediting agencies assist the credit transfer process, and the how differing transfer policies affect students’ graduation time as well as their impact on costs to the federal government.

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